
**Technology, Energy &
Communications Committee**

HB 3105

Brief Description: Creating the Washington state department of energy.

Sponsors: Representatives Anderson, Dunshee, Priest, Santos, Sullivan and McIntire.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes the Washington State Department of Energy.
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Hearing Date: 2/5/08

Staff: Scott Richards (786-7156).

Background:

In 1996 the Legislature dismantled the Washington State Energy Office and divided the office's duties among three state-based entities: the Energy Policy Division of the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (DCTED); the Washington State University Energy Extension Program; and the Department of General Administration.

Energy Policy Division

The DCTED Energy Policy Division is charged with supervising and administrating energy-related activities in the state, as well as advising the Governor and the Legislature with respect to energy matters affecting the state.

Also, the Energy Policy Division:

- develops contingency plans for energy shortages or emergencies;
- serves as the official state agency responsible for coordinating implementation of the state energy strategy;
- carries out energy programs assigned by the Governor or the Legislature, adopting rules to carry out the powers and duties;
- coordinates federal energy programs appropriate for state-level implementation;
- serves as a central repository for collection of existing data on energy resources;

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

- provides office space and other support for the state's representatives to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council. The Council develops and maintains a regional power plan and a fish and wildlife program to balance the Northwest's environment and energy needs;
- provides administrative support to the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council; and
- provides support for increasing cost-effective energy conservation and development of cost-effective energy resources.

Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council

The Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) provides a "one-stop" siting process for major energy facilities in Washington. The EFSEC coordinates all of the evaluation and licensing steps for siting major energy facilities in Washington. If a project is approved, the EFSEC specifies the conditions of construction and operation; issues permits in lieu of any other individual state or local agency authority; and manages an environmental and safety oversight program of facility and site operations.

Washington State University Energy Extension Program

In 1996 the Legislature transferred energy education, applied research, and technology transfer programs from the State Energy Office to Washington State University (WSU). The WSU Energy Extension Program receives project funding from federal government agencies, federal power marketing agencies, the nonprofit Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance, and several other sources. The WSU Energy Extension Program maintains a staff of 60 working in Olympia, Spokane, and at other satellite locations. Clients of the WSU Energy Extension Program range from industrial plants, to private consulting firms, businesses, government agencies, and utilities.

The Department of General Administration

In 1996 the Legislature transferred powers, duties, and functions of the State Energy Office related to energy efficiency in public buildings to the Department of General Administration (GA).

The GA maintains responsibilities in the following state agency-focused energy efficiency programs:

- life-cycle cost analysis guidelines for state agencies;
- green building rating standards;
- conservation and cogeneration in state facilities;
- energy audits at state facilities; and
- energy saving performance contracting.

In addition to the energy efficiency programs, the GA is responsible for state renewable fuel contracts and agency renewable fuel usage reporting. The GA also assists state agencies in the purchase of fuel cells as backup power generation.

Summary of Bill:

Washington State Department of Energy

The Washington State Department of Energy (Department) is created with three subdivisions: energy policy, energy facility site evaluation, and energy resources procurement.

The executive head and appointing authority of the Department is the Director of the Washington State Department of Energy. The Director is appointed by the Governor, with the consent of the Senate, and serves at the pleasure of the Governor.

All the powers, duties, and functions of the Energy Policy Division of the DCTED are transferred to the Department. The EFSEC is abolished and its powers, duties, and functions are transferred to the Department. All references to the chair of the EFSEC in state statute means the Director of the Department or the Department. The Department must contract, as deemed necessary by the Director, with the WSU Energy Extension to provide research services.

Findings

The bill provides findings relating to (1) current energy market conditions and policy assumptions; and (2) the state's role in developing new electrical generation and transmission facilities, securing transportation fuel supplies, and promoting greater use of distributed generation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 4, 2008.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.